

Voluntary Euthanasia and Moral Philosophy: An Ethical Perspective

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Abstract

Voluntary euthanasia remains a highly contested ethical issue, balancing individual autonomy against societal responsibilities. This study explores the philosophical foundations of voluntary euthanasia by analyzing ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and rights-based perspectives. It examines the moral justifications from diverse philosophical standpoints while addressing the legal and ethical tensions between personal choice and collective moral obligations. A qualitative research approach is employed to investigate how different frameworks shape contemporary debates on euthanasia. Findings highlight the complex interplay between individual rights, medical ethics, and legal safeguards, underscoring the need for a balanced approach that respects personal dignity while ensuring ethical integrity. The study contributes to academic discourse by offering a nuanced understanding of euthanasia's moral and legal implications.

Keywords: Voluntary Euthanasia, Moral Philosophy, Ethical Theories, Legal Tensions, Societal Responsibility, Utilitarianism, Deontology.

1. Introduction

Voluntary euthanasia, the practice of intentionally ending a person's life to relieve suffering with their consent, has been a subject of ethical debate within moral philosophy for centuries. Rooted in principles of autonomy, dignity, and compassion, voluntary euthanasia raises fundamental questions about the right to die, the moral responsibilities of caregivers, and the societal implications of permitting medically assisted death (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). Ethical theories such as utilitarianism argue that voluntary euthanasia reduces overall suffering, making it a morally justifiable

act (Singer, 2011). In contrast, deontological perspectives, particularly those influenced by Kantian ethics, contend that human life has intrinsic value, and taking a life—even with consent—violates moral duty (Kant, 1785/1996). Additionally, virtue ethics examines the moral character of individuals involved in euthanasia, emphasizing compassion and practical wisdom in end-of-life decisions (Hurst & Mauron, 2006). Religious and cultural viewpoints further complicate the ethical landscape, as many traditions uphold the sanctity of life and reject euthanasia as morally impermissible (Keown, 2002). While legal frameworks differ across countries, ongoing philosophical discussions continue to shape ethical perspectives on voluntary euthanasia, highlighting the tension between individual rights and collective moral responsibility (Sumner, 2011). This study critically explores these ethical dimensions, analyzing various philosophical arguments to provide a comprehensive understanding of voluntary euthanasia from a moral perspective.

1.1.The Statement of the Problem

The ethical and legal debate over voluntary euthanasia presents a complex moral dilemma, balancing individual autonomy with societal responsibilities. While proponents argue that individuals have the right to choose a dignified death, opponents raise concerns about the sanctity of life, potential coercion, and the broader implications for medical ethics and legal frameworks. The challenge lies in addressing the moral justifications of euthanasia across different philosophical perspectives while ensuring legal safeguards that prevent misuse. This study seeks to critically analyze the ethical foundations, moral justifications, and legal tensions of voluntary euthanasia, exploring how philosophical theories shape the discourse on individual choice versus collective responsibility.

1.2.The Need and Significance of the Study

The study on voluntary euthanasia is significant as it addresses one of the most profound ethical dilemmas in contemporary medical and legal discourse. With advancements in medical technology prolonging life, the debate over the right to die with dignity has gained urgency. This study is needed to provide a comprehensive philosophical analysis

of voluntary euthanasia, exploring ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and rights-based perspectives. By examining moral justifications and legal tensions, it contributes to a deeper understanding of how societies balance individual autonomy with collective responsibilities. Additionally, the study offers insights into policy-making, guiding lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and ethicists in framing regulations that ensure both personal freedom and ethical safeguards. It also serves as a valuable resource for academic discourse, fostering critical thinking on the moral implications of end-of-life decisions.

1.3.The Research Questions

RQ₁: What are the philosophical foundations of voluntary euthanasia based on ethical theories?

RQ₂: How do different philosophical perspectives provide moral justifications for voluntary euthanasia?

RQ₃: What are the legal and ethical tensions between individual choices and societal responsibilities regarding voluntary euthanasia?

1.4.The Objectives of the Study

O₁: To examine the philosophical foundations of voluntary euthanasia by analyzing ethical theories.

O₂: To explore the moral justifications of voluntary euthanasia from different philosophical perspectives.

O₃: To examine the legal and ethical tensions between individual choices and societal responsibilities regarding voluntary euthanasia.

2. The Review of Related Literature

- **Sahoo, U., & Mahavidyalaya, B. (2024).** A Conceptual Analysis of Criminality in Active (Non-Voluntary) Euthanasia. Active non-voluntary euthanasia is the subject of this article's efforts to investigate its illegality and determine whether or not it

merits moral and legal penalties. In conclusion, it is argued that aggressive, non-voluntary euthanasia ought not to be considered a theft.

- **Westphal, E. R., Nowak, W. S., & Krenchinski, C. V. (2019).** Concerning the morality, ethics, and philosophy of euthanasia: The results showed a clear split between those who were in favour of and those who were against euthanasia. Contemporary philosophical, moral, and ethical principles that are at odds with postmodernism surround this debate. The prevailing principles of Christian ethics do not permit the consideration of euthanasia as a contemporary idea. Most health professionals agree on certain standards, and these standards include this moral.
- **Rachels, J. (2019).** Different types of euthanasia: active and passive. Concerning Demise, Dying, and the Last Stages of Life. A careful analysis of the commonly held distinction between active and passive euthanasia is required. There is a huge moral chasm between the two, so although the latter could be allowed sometimes, conventional theology holds that the former is always immoral. Many counterarguments might be raised in opposition to this notion. rather than beginning, aggressive euthanasia is better than passive euthanasia in many cases.
- **Seay, G. (2011).** In response to Garcia, on euthanasia and common sense. In a previous paper, I defended voluntary euthanasia. However, J. L. A. Garcia argues that this constitutes a "assault on traditional common sense" regarding the scope of medical ethics, specifically regarding my stance that a physician has only a defeasible duty to refrain from intentionally killing, and not an unconditional one.
- **Varelius, J. (2006).** Medical goals, voluntary euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide ideas. The moral acceptability of physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia assessed by considering what patients may reasonably expect their physicians to perform, because the legitimate purposes of medicine are ultimately established by what the medical profession is intended to accomplish. Modern bioethical literature on medical goal-setting, the article argues, skirts the question of whether or not physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia are morally acceptable. To conclude the proper goals of medicine and arrive at a fair solution to this problem, we need determine the best philosophical theory on the essence of prudential value.

2.1.The Research Gap

The existing literature on voluntary euthanasia primarily focuses on its classification, legality, and moral acceptability within different ethical frameworks. However, there is a gap in comprehensive philosophical analysis that integrates ethical theories with the evolving societal and medical perspectives on euthanasia (Westphal et al., 2019). While scholars have debated the physician's role and medical goals (Varelius, 2006), the broader implications of individual autonomy versus collective moral responsibility remain underexplored. Additionally, the critique of traditional ethical standpoints, such as common-sense morality (Seay, 2011), lacks an in-depth examination of their applicability in contemporary bioethics. This study aims to bridge these gaps by critically analyzing voluntary euthanasia through diverse philosophical perspectives, highlighting ethical dilemmas and legal tensions.

3. The Methodology of the Study

A qualitative research design allows for an in-depth exploration of the diverse perspectives surrounding voluntary euthanasia, including ethical, philosophical, legal, and medical viewpoints. By employing methods such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and case studies, this approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the moral justifications and ethical dilemmas associated with end-of-life decisions. Qualitative research enables the examination of subjective experiences, cultural influences, and societal attitudes toward euthanasia, offering nuanced insights that quantitative methods may overlook. Furthermore, it allows researchers to engage with diverse stakeholders, including ethicists, legal experts, healthcare professionals, and individuals affected by euthanasia-related policies. This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive analysis of voluntary euthanasia within the broader framework of moral philosophy and societal responsibilities.

4. The Analysis and Interpretation

O₁: To examine the philosophical foundations of voluntary euthanasia by analyzing ethical theories.

The ethical debate surrounding voluntary euthanasia is deeply rooted in moral philosophy, with different ethical theories offering varied justifications and criticisms. Philosophical perspectives such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics provide distinct frameworks for evaluating the morality of ending life at a patient's request. These perspectives shape contemporary discussions on individual autonomy, suffering, moral duty, and the ethical responsibilities of caregivers and society.

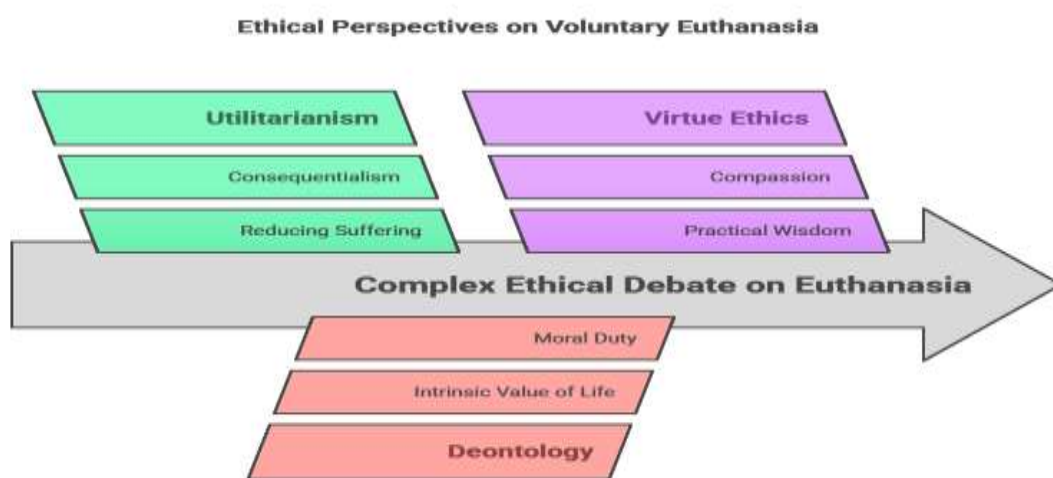


Figure 4.1: The Ethical Perspectives on Voluntary Euthanasia

Source: Made by Investigator

Utilitarianism: The Ethics of Consequentialism and Reducing Suffering

Utilitarianism, primarily associated with philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, evaluates the morality of an action based on its consequences, particularly in terms of maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering (Mill, 1863/1998). From a utilitarian perspective, voluntary euthanasia can be justified if it alleviates unbearable pain and enhances overall well-being. Peter Singer (2011) argues that forcing individuals to endure prolonged suffering when they have rationally chosen euthanasia is morally indefensible, as it violates the principle of reducing unnecessary harm. The utilitarian approach thus supports euthanasia as a compassionate response to terminal illness, provided it leads to a net decrease in suffering.

However, critics of utilitarianism point out that its emphasis on consequences lead to morally troubling implications. For instance, if euthanasia is normalized for terminally ill patients, there is a concern that it might gradually extend to other vulnerable populations, such as the disabled or elderly, who may feel pressured to end their lives to avoid burdening others (Keown, 2002). This potential for unintended consequences raises ethical concerns about the misuse of utilitarian reasoning in euthanasia policies.

Deontology: The Intrinsic Value of Human Life and Moral Duty

Deontological ethics, particularly the Kantian framework, opposes voluntary euthanasia on the grounds that human life has intrinsic value and must never be treated merely as a means to an end (Kant, 1785/1996). Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative asserts that moral actions must be universalizable and respect human dignity. According to Kant, choosing euthanasia—even voluntarily—contradicts the moral duty to preserve life, as it treats existence as conditional rather than inherently valuable (Wood, 1999).

From a deontological standpoint, even if voluntary euthanasia alleviates suffering, it cannot be morally justified because it involves intentionally ending a human life, which violates the principle of duty-based morality (Velleman, 1999). Furthermore, some deontologists argue that permitting euthanasia undermines the doctor-patient relationship by shifting the role of physicians from healers to facilitators of death (Sulmasy & Finlay, 2017). However, critics argue that Kant's rigid stance fails to consider the complexities of end-of-life suffering and individual autonomy, making it an inflexible framework for addressing euthanasia in contemporary medical ethics.

Virtue Ethics: Compassion, Practical Wisdom, and the Morality of Euthanasia

Virtue ethics, rooted in the works of Aristotle, focuses on the moral character of individuals rather than strict rules or consequences (Aristotle, 350 BCE/2009). According to virtue ethics, ethical decision-making should be guided by virtues such as compassion, empathy, and practical wisdom (phronesis). From this perspective, voluntary euthanasia may be considered morally permissible if it reflects virtues such as kindness and a commitment to alleviating suffering (Hurst & Mauron, 2006).

A virtue ethicist would argue that a physician who performs euthanasia out of genuine concern for a suffering patient demonstrates moral excellence rather than moral failure (Oakley, 1996). However, virtue ethics also warns against making hasty or emotion-driven decisions, emphasizing the importance of discernment in each individual case (MacIntyre, 1981). Critics of virtue ethics point out that its reliance on situational judgment can lead to inconsistencies in moral decision-making, as different individuals may interpret virtues differently in euthanasia cases.

The philosophical foundations of voluntary euthanasia reveal a complex interplay of ethical principles, each offering valuable insights while also presenting challenges. Utilitarianism supports euthanasia as a means to reduce suffering but risks ethical slippery slopes. Deontology strictly opposes euthanasia due to the intrinsic value of life and the moral duty to preserve it, yet it may not fully account for human suffering and personal choice. Virtue ethics advocates for euthanasia based on compassion and moral character but requires careful ethical discernment. These philosophical perspectives continue to shape the debate on voluntary euthanasia, highlighting the tension between individual autonomy, societal values, and medical ethics in end-of-life care.

O₂: To explore the moral justifications of voluntary euthanasia from different philosophical perspectives.

The moral justifications for voluntary euthanasia vary significantly across different philosophical traditions, reflecting distinct ethical considerations regarding autonomy, suffering, and the value of life. Utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, existentialism, and rights-based ethics offer differing but insightful perspectives on the moral legitimacy of an individual's decision to end their life in cases of unbearable suffering. Each approach contributes to the ongoing ethical discourse, providing arguments that either support or challenge the moral permissibility of voluntary euthanasia.

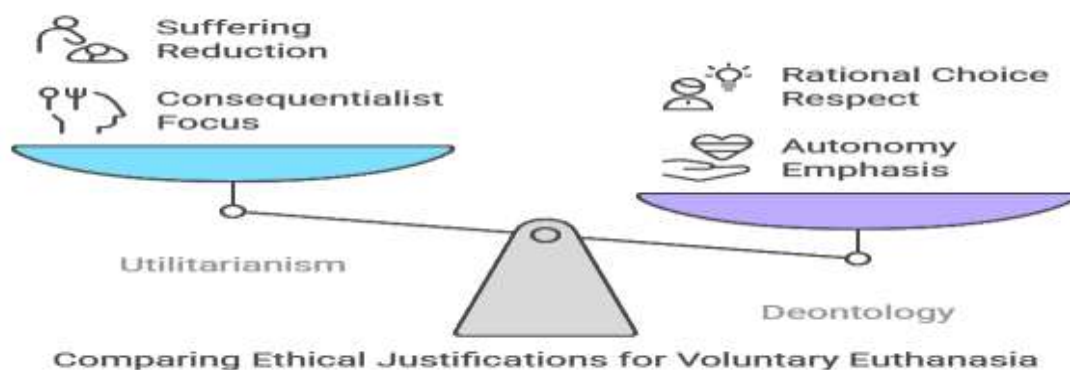


Figure 4.2: The Moral Justification of Voluntary Euthanasia

Source: Made by Investigator

Utilitarian Justification: Maximizing Well-Being and Minimizing Suffering

Utilitarianism, rooted in the works of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, assesses moral actions based on their consequences, particularly their ability to maximize happiness and minimize suffering (Mill, 1863/1998). From this perspective, voluntary euthanasia is morally justifiable if it leads to a net increase in overall well-being by relieving individuals from prolonged agony. Peter Singer (2011) argues that forcing terminally ill patients to endure severe pain when they have made a rational decision to end their suffering is both cruel and ethically indefensible. In utilitarian thought, the principle of the "greatest good for the greatest number" extends beyond the individual to society at large, as legalizing euthanasia can reduce healthcare costs and free up medical resources for those who can benefit from treatment (Harris, 2003).

However, critics argue that a purely utilitarian approach risks justifying euthanasia in cases where it may not be entirely voluntary or where social pressures influence a person's decision (Keown, 2002). The potential for a "slippery slope" effect—where euthanasia becomes normalized and extended to vulnerable populations—remains a primary concern in utilitarian ethics. Despite these concerns, utilitarianism provides a compelling justification for voluntary euthanasia by prioritizing the alleviation of suffering as a moral imperative.

Deontological Justification: Autonomy and Rational Moral Choice

Although deontological ethics, particularly the Kantian tradition, generally opposes euthanasia on the grounds that human life has intrinsic moral worth, a more nuanced interpretation allows for its justification under the principle of autonomy. Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy holds that individuals should be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means to an end (Kant, 1785/1996). If a person, acting as a rational moral agent, autonomously chooses euthanasia to preserve their dignity and avoid suffering, then respecting that choice aligns with Kant's emphasis on individual autonomy (Dworkin, 1994).

A deontological argument in favor of voluntary euthanasia also draws from W. D. Ross's concept of prima facie duties, which suggests that moral obligations, such as preserving life, can sometimes be overridden by stronger duties, such as alleviating suffering (Ross, 1930/2002). In this view, while life is valuable, it is not an absolute duty to preserve it at all costs if doing so results in extreme suffering. Therefore, voluntary euthanasia may be morally justifiable when it aligns with the duty to respect a person's rational decision about their own existence.

Opponents argue that Kantian ethics fundamentally rejects euthanasia because it contradicts the categorical imperative, which demands that moral principles be universalized (Velleman, 1999). If voluntary euthanasia were universally accepted, it could erode respect for life and lead to unintended moral consequences. Despite these objections, a deontological framework that prioritizes autonomy provides a strong moral foundation for justifying voluntary euthanasia in cases where individuals make informed, rational decisions about their own end-of-life care.

Virtue Ethics Justification: Compassion and Practical Wisdom

Virtue ethics, based on Aristotle's philosophy, evaluates moral actions through the development of virtuous character traits, such as compassion, wisdom, and justice (Aristotle, 350 BCE/2009). From this perspective, voluntary euthanasia can be justified if it is performed out of genuine concern for a person's well-being and reflects virtues such as kindness and empathy (Hurst & Mauron, 2006). A physician who assists a

patient in ending their suffering, after careful deliberation and with the patient's full consent, demonstrates moral virtue rather than moral failure.

A virtue-ethical approach also emphasizes practical wisdom (phronesis) in decision-making, advocating for case-by-case evaluations rather than rigid moral rules (MacIntyre, 1981). Unlike deontological and utilitarian frameworks, virtue ethics does not rely on absolute principles but instead considers the moral character and intentions behind an action. If euthanasia is motivated by a sincere commitment to relieving suffering, it may be seen as an ethically virtuous act rather than an immoral one (Oakley, 1996).

Critics argue that virtue ethics lacks clear guidelines for determining when euthanasia is justified, potentially leading to inconsistent moral judgments (Foot, 1978). However, its emphasis on moral character and compassion provides a human-centered justification for euthanasia, grounded in the values of care and dignity.

Existentialist Justification: Authenticity and Individual Freedom

Existentialist philosophy, particularly the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, emphasizes personal freedom and the responsibility of individuals to define their own meaning in life (Sartre, 1943/2007). In this context, voluntary euthanasia can be morally justified as an exercise of radical autonomy, where individuals take control of their existence and decide when life ceases to be meaningful (Camus, 1942/1991). If a person determines that continued suffering undermines their dignity and ability to live authentically, choosing euthanasia becomes an assertion of existential freedom rather than an act of moral failure (Nagel, 1970).

However, existentialists also warn against external influences that may coerce individuals into making such decisions, stressing that euthanasia must truly be voluntary and free from societal pressures (Beauvoir, 1947/2004). The existentialist perspective thus supports euthanasia as a morally justified choice when it reflects an individual's authentic decision to end suffering on their own terms.

Rights-Based Justification: Bodily Autonomy and Human Rights

A rights-based ethical approach argues that voluntary euthanasia is justified based on the fundamental human right to bodily autonomy and self-determination (Dworkin, 1994). John Locke's concept of individual liberty suggests that individuals have the right to make choices regarding their own bodies, including decisions about life and death (Locke, 1690/1988). Modern human rights discourse also supports this view, emphasizing that denying a competent person the right to euthanasia may constitute an infringement on personal liberty (Glover, 1977).

However, rights-based arguments must address concerns about the potential for abuse, particularly in cases where individuals may be vulnerable to coercion or lack full mental capacity to make informed decisions (Sumner, 2011). Nevertheless, in a framework that prioritizes human rights, voluntary euthanasia is morally justifiable as an extension of individual freedom and autonomy.

The moral justifications for voluntary euthanasia vary depending on the philosophical perspective. Utilitarianism supports euthanasia as a means to minimize suffering and maximize well-being, while deontology defends it under the principle of individual autonomy and rational moral choice. Virtue ethics emphasizes compassion and moral character, whereas existentialism upholds euthanasia as an expression of personal freedom and authenticity. A rights-based approach further reinforces its justification through the principle of bodily autonomy. These diverse philosophical arguments contribute to the complex ethical landscape surrounding voluntary euthanasia, highlighting both its moral legitimacy and the ethical challenges it presents.

O₃: To examine the legal and ethical tensions between individual choices and societal responsibilities regarding voluntary euthanasia.

The debate over voluntary euthanasia highlights significant tensions between individual autonomy and societal responsibilities. While the principle of personal freedom justifies the right to choose a dignified death, ethical and legal concerns arise regarding broader societal implications, including potential abuses, the value of life, and medical ethics. These tensions are explored within the frameworks of autonomy-based liberalism,

communitarianism, utilitarianism, deontology, and legal positivism, offering a nuanced perspective on the conflict between individual rights and collective moral responsibilities.

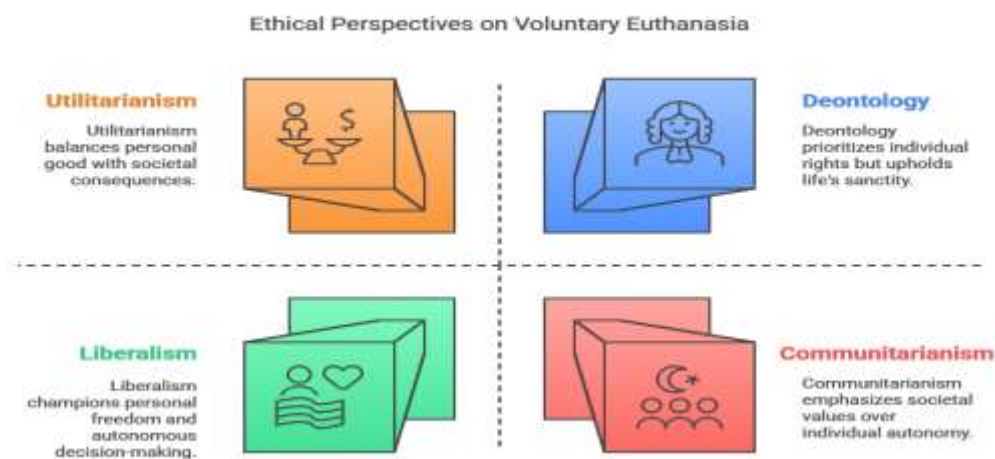


Figure 4.3: The Legal and Ethical Tensions between individual Choices and Societal Responsibilities Regarding Voluntary Euthanasia
Source: Made by Investigator

Autonomy vs. Societal Interests: The Liberal Perspective

From a liberal ethical standpoint, personal autonomy is a fundamental right, allowing individuals to make decisions about their own lives, including the choice to end suffering through euthanasia (Dworkin, 1994). John Stuart Mill (1863/1998) argues in *On Liberty* that individuals should have sovereignty over their own bodies, provided their actions do not harm others. According to this principle, voluntary euthanasia is morally permissible if it reflects an informed, autonomous decision made without coercion.

However, societal concerns arise when the autonomy of one individual potentially weakens the broader respect for life. Some scholars argue that legalizing euthanasia risks creating a "duty to die," especially for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, disabled, or terminally ill (Callahan, 2002). The fear is that social or financial pressures might influence individuals to opt for euthanasia out of a perceived burden rather than a

true exercise of autonomy. This tension illustrates the challenge of balancing individual rights with societal duties to protect life.

Communitarian Ethics: The Collective Moral Order

Communitarian philosophy, in contrast to liberal individualism, argues that ethical decisions must consider the broader social fabric rather than being based solely on personal autonomy (Etzioni, 1997). From this perspective, euthanasia is not merely a private choice but a communal concern that affects cultural values, legal norms, and social institutions. Legalizing euthanasia could alter society's perception of life and death, shifting healthcare priorities from palliative care to life-ending interventions (Fukuyama, 2002).

Michael Sandel (2009) highlights that personal choices must be evaluated in light of their impact on the moral foundations of society. A state-sanctioned right to die could, over time, erode the duty of care that families and healthcare professionals have toward the terminally ill. Therefore, communitarians caution against individualistic interpretations of euthanasia that ignore societal responsibilities in upholding the sanctity of life.

Utilitarianism: Balancing Individual Good with Social Consequences

Utilitarianism, as advocated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, justifies voluntary euthanasia based on the principle of maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering (Singer, 2011). If euthanasia reduces pain for a terminally ill patient while benefiting society by reallocating medical resources, it can be considered ethically justifiable (Harris, 2003).

However, societal concerns about unintended consequences challenge this perspective. The "slippery slope" argument warns that euthanasia might gradually extend to non-voluntary cases, as seen in historical instances where state-sanctioned euthanasia programs, such as in Nazi Germany, led to widespread abuses (Keown, 2002). Ethical safeguards must be in place to ensure that euthanasia remains voluntary and does not become a mechanism for societal convenience at the cost of vulnerable lives.

Deontology: The Inviolability of Life vs. Rational Moral Choice

From a deontological perspective, Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative suggests that human life has intrinsic worth and should not be treated as a means to an end (Kant, 1785/1996). This view opposes euthanasia on the grounds that permitting it for one person could lead to a universal rule that undermines the sanctity of life (Velleman, 1999). Kantian ethics argues that respecting the dignity of life should not be contingent upon suffering or personal preferences.

However, some deontologists reconcile euthanasia with autonomy, arguing that rational beings have the moral right to make choices about their own existence (Dworkin, 1994). W. D. Ross (1930/2002) introduces the concept of *prima facie* duties, suggesting that while preserving life is a moral duty, it may sometimes be overridden by a stronger obligation to relieve suffering. The legal tension, therefore, lies in whether laws should reflect an absolute commitment to life or a nuanced consideration of rational autonomy.

Legal Positivism: The Role of the State in Defining Euthanasia

Legal positivism, which holds that laws derive their legitimacy from social consensus rather than moral considerations, suggests that euthanasia should be regulated based on evolving legal norms (Hart, 1961). Countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Canada have legalized euthanasia through democratic processes, reflecting changing social values regarding end-of-life choices (Sumner, 2011).

However, legal challenges arise in defining the limits of euthanasia. Who qualifies for euthanasia? What safeguards prevent coercion? Should psychological suffering be a valid criterion? These legal complexities highlight the difficulty of balancing individual rights with societal responsibilities. While law must adapt to ethical shifts, it must also prevent potential abuses and maintain public trust in medical institutions (Glover, 1977).

The ethical and legal tensions surrounding voluntary euthanasia stem from the conflict between individual autonomy and societal responsibilities. Liberal philosophy emphasizes personal choice, while communitarianism stresses collective moral obligations. Utilitarianism supports euthanasia for its benefits in minimizing suffering,

yet raises concerns about unintended consequences. Deontology upholds the sanctity of life but allows for rational moral choices. Legal positivism highlights the role of the state in regulating euthanasia while grappling with ethical complexities. These diverse perspectives demonstrate the need for a balanced approach that respects individual freedoms while safeguarding ethical and legal integrity in end-of-life decisions.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the ethical and legal tensions surrounding voluntary euthanasia arise from the complex interplay between individual autonomy and societal responsibilities. While liberal and utilitarian perspectives justify euthanasia based on personal choice and the reduction of suffering, communitarian and deontological viewpoints emphasize the societal duty to uphold the sanctity of life and prevent potential abuses. Legal positivism underscores the evolving role of law in regulating euthanasia, ensuring safeguards while adapting to shifting moral values. Balancing these perspectives requires a nuanced approach that respects individual freedoms while maintaining ethical integrity, medical trust, and legal clarity in end-of-life decisions.

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